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THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN RACE RELATIONS--NOTES AND QUERIES.

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DISCUSSED IN THIS SERIES OF "NOTES AND QUERIES" ARE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF IDENTITY, PARTICULARLY THE IDENTITY OF THE NEGRO. HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING NEGRO IDENTITY IS THE EXPRESSION BY NEGRO AUTHORS OF THEIR NEGATIVE IDENTITY (INVISIBILITY, NAMELESSNESS, AND FACELESSNESS), INTERPRETED HERE AS A DEMAND TO BE HEARD, SEEN, RECOGNIZED, AND FACED AS INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN AS MEN MARKED BY THEIR COLOR AND STEREOTYPES. THESE AUTHORS ARE SEEN TO BE TRYING TO LIBERATE THEIR "SURRENDERED IDENTITIES." COMPLICATIONS RELATED TO UNDERSTANDING NEGRO IDENTITY, WHICH MIGHT BE CLARIFIED BY THE CONCEPT OF NEGATIVE IDENTITY, ARE--(1) THE HIERARCHY OF CULTURALLY RELATED POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ELEMENTS IN EACH INDIVIDUAL'S PSYCHOSOCIAL IDENTITY, (2) THE FUSION OF NEGATIVE IMAGES PRESENTED BY THE MAJORITY INTO THE NEGATIVE IDENTITY OF THE OPPRESSED AND EXPLOITED, AND (3) THE VESTED INTEREST OF THE OPPRESSOR IN THE NEGATIVE IDENTITY OF THE OPPRESSED. THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE NEGRO PERSONALITY AND THE COMMUNITY ARE NOT KNOWN COMPLETELY, AND THE QUESTION ARISES WHETHER THE NEGRO'S NEGATIVE IDENTITY CAN BE DEFINED ONLY IN TERMS OF HIS DEFENSIVE ADJUSTMENT TO THE DOMINANT WHITE MAJORITY. IT IS FELT THAT IT IS FROM THE "WIDER" ASPECTS OF IDENTITY AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE CULTURE THAT THE NEGRO WILL FIND HIS OWN IDENTITY. (JL)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The Concept of Identity in Race Relations: Notes and Queries

Introductory Remark

THE FOLLOWING notes represent an expansion of the remarks on the concept of identity which I was asked to make in November 1964 at the meeting of the committee gathered to plan the current issues of *Dædalus* on the Negro American. Shortly after that meeting, I undertook a trip abroad in order to interview the surviving witnesses and to study the remaining documents of what seemed, when the study was first planned, a long-past episode in a faraway country, namely, one of Gandhi's nonviolent campaigns. I am now returning to my fragmentary contribution to this symposium for the very reason that the concept or at least the term identity seems not only to have pervaded the literature on the Negro revolution in this country, but also to have come to represent in India (and in other countries) something in the psychological core of the revolution of the colored races and nations who seek inner as well as outer emancipation from colonial rule and from the remnants of colonial patterns of thought. When, for example, Nehru said (as I have been told) that "Gandhi gave India an identity," he obviously put the term into the center of that development of a nonviolent technique, both religious and political, by which Gandhi strove to enhance a unique unity among Indians while insisting on their complete autonomy within the British Empire. But what did Nehru mean?

R. P. Warren, in his *Who Speaks for the Negro?* reacts to the first (but by no means last) mention of the word by one of his informants with the exclamation:

> I seize the word *identity*. It is a key word. You hear it over and over again. On this word will focus, around this word will coagulate, a dozen issues, shifting, shading into each other. Alienated from the world to which he is born and from the country of which he is a citizen, yet

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surrounded by the successful values of that world, and country, how can the Negro define himself?[1]

Usually, the term is used without explanation as if it were obvious what it means; and, indeed, faddish as the word has become, it has also come to mean to many something both profound and unfathomable.

Social scientists sometimes attempt to make it more concrete. However, if they do not quickly equate it with the strangely pat question "Who am I?" they make such words as "identity crisis," "self-identity," or "sexual identity" fit whatever they are investigating. For the sake of logical or experimental maneuverability (and in order to keep in good academic company) they try to treat these terms as matters of social roles, personal traits, or conscious self-images, shunning the less manageable and the less obscure (and often more sinister) implications of the concept. Its use has, in fact, become so indiscriminate that the other day a German reviewer (of a new edition of my first book in which I first used the term in the context of psychoanalytic ego theory) called the concept the pet subject of the *amerikanische Popularpsychologie*. As we might say in American popular psychology: that does it. I return to the subject because (in spite of slogan-like misuse and lip service) it does seem to speak to the condition of many serious observers at this juncture of history. I will try to explain some of its dimensions and relate them to what can only be approximate illustrations from race-relations. I will claim no further status for this effort than "notes and queries"[2] within a symposium, that is, in a context in which what will be referred to here as a *revolution of awareness* can be seen against the background of what Gandhi called the "four-fold ruin" wrought by political and economic as well as cultural and spiritual degradation; for surely, power, or at least the power to choose, is vitally related to identity. In this context, I shall emphasize rather than minimize the alternatives and controversies, the ambiguities and ambivalences concerning various aspects of the identity issue.

I. *Individual and Communal*

At a time when the term identity refers, more often than not, to a more or less desperate quest, or even (as in the case of the Negro American) to something mostly negative or absent ("invisible,"

"inaudible," "unnamed"), it may be well to introduce the subject with quotations from two men who asserted strongly what identity feels like when you become aware of it. My two witnesses are the bearded and patriarchal founding fathers of the kind of psychology on which this writer's thinking on identity is based. As a *subjective sense* of an *invigorating sameness* and *continuity*, what I would call a sense of identity seems to me best described by William James in a letter to his wife. "A man's character," he wrote, "is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: '*This* is the real me!' " Such experience always includes

> "an element of active tension, of holding my own, as it were, and trusting outward things to perform their part so as to make it a full harmony, but without any *guaranty* that they will. Make it a guaranty—and the attitude immediately becomes to my consciousness stagnant and stingless. Take away the guaranty, and I feel (provided I am *uberhaupt* in vigorous condition) a sort of deep enthusiastic bliss, of bitter willingness to do and suffer anything . . . and which, although it is a mere mood or emotion to which I can give no form in words, authenticates itself to me as the deepest principle of all active and theoretic determination which I possess. . . ."[3]

James uses the word "character," but I am taking the liberty of claiming that he describes what today we would call a sense of identity, and that he does so in a way which can in principle be experienced by any man. To him it is both mental and moral (the last a word also often swallowed up by ours); and he experiences it as something that "comes upon you" as a re-cognition, almost as a surprise rather than as something strenuously "quested" after. It is an active tension (rather than a paralyzing question)—a tension which, furthermore, must create a challenge "without guaranty" rather than one dissipated in a clamor for certainty. But let us remember in passing that James was in his thirties when he wrote this, that he had faced and articulated an "identity crisis" of honest and desperate depth, and that he became *the* Psychologist-Philosopher of American Pragmatism only after having attempted to integrate other cultural, philosophic, and professional identity elements.[4]

One can study in James' life history the emergence of a "self-made" identity in a new and expansive civilization. But for a statement of that unity of *personal and cultural* identity which is rooted

in an ancient people's fate we turn to Sigmund Freud. In an address to the Society of B'nai B'rith in Vienna in 1926 he said:

> What bound me to Jewry was (I am ashamed to admit) neither faith nor national pride, for I have always been an unbeliever and was brought up without any religion though not without a respect for what are called the "ethical" standards of human civilization.
>
> Whenever I felt an inclination to national enthusiasm I strove to suppress it as being harmful and wrong, alarmed by the warning examples of the peoples among whom we Jews live. But plenty of other things remained over to make the attraction of Jewry and Jews irresistible—many obscure emotional forces, which were the more powerful the less they could be expressed in words, as well as a clear consciousness of inner identity, the safe privacy of a common mental construction. And beyond this there was a perception that it was to my Jewish nature alone that I owed two characteristics that had become indispensable to me in the difficult course of my life. Because I was a Jew I found myself free from many prejudices which restricted others in the use of their intellect; and as a Jew I was prepared to join the Opposition and to do without agreement with the "compact majority."[5]

No translation ever does justice to the grandiose choice of words in Freud's German original. "Obscure emotional forces" are *"dunkle Gefuehlsmaechte"*; the "safe privacy of a common mental construction" is *"die Heimlichkeit der inneren Konstruktion"*—not just "mental," then, and certainly not "private," but a deep communality known only to those who share in it.

This quotation takes on new meaning in the context for which this is written, for *this* "consciousness of inner identity" includes a sense of bitter pride preserved by a dispersed and often despised people throughout a long history of alternating persecution and reestablishment. It is anchored in a particular (here intellectual) gift which had victoriously emerged from the suppression of other opportunities. At the same time, it should not be overlooked (for we will need to refer back to it later) that this *positive identity* is seen against the background of a *negative* counterpart in all "the peoples among whom we Jews live," namely, "prejudices which restrict others in the use of their intellect." Identity here is one aspect of the struggle for ethnic survival: one person's or group's identity may be relative to another's; and identity awareness may have to do with matters of an *inner emancipation* from a more dominant identity, such as the "compact majority." An exquisite triumph is suggested in the claim that the same historical development which restricted the prejudiced in the free use of their intellect made

those discriminated against freer and sturdier in intellectual matters.

These two statements (and the life-histories behind them) serve to establish a first dimension of identity which immediately helps to explain why it is so tenacious and yet so hard to grasp: for here we deal with something which can be experienced as "identical" *in the core of the individual* and yet also identical *in the core of a communal culture*, and which is, in fact, the identity of those two identities.

But we can also see that this is a matter of *growth*, both personal and communal. For a mature psychosocial identity presupposes a community of people whose traditional values become significant to the growing person even as his growth and his gifts assume relevance for them. Mere "roles" which can be "played" interchangeably are not sufficient; only an integration of roles which foster individual vitality within a vital trend in the existing or developing social order can support identities. (We may speak, then, of a *complementarity* of an *inner synthesis* in the individual and of *role integration* in his group.)

In all their poetic spontaneity these two statements prove to be the product of trained minds and therefore exemplify the main dimensions of a positive sense of identity almost systematically: from here one could proceed in a number of directions. But since these utterances are taken not from theoretical works, but from special communications (a letter to his wife from a man who married late; an address to his "brothers" by an observer long isolated in his field), it would seem most fitting now to quote corresponding voices among Negroes. But the mere contemplation of the task reveals two difficulties. The corresponding statements of Negro authors are couched in terms so negative that they at first suggest an absence of identity or the prevalence of what we will call *negative* identity elements. From Du Bois' famous passage (quoted in Myrdal's introduction to *Dark Ghetto*)[8] on the *inaudible* Negro, we would be led to Baldwin's and Ellison's very titles suggesting *invisibility, namelessness, facelessness.* But I would not approach these themes as a mere plaintive expression of the Negro American's sense of "nobody-ness," a social role which, God knows, was his heritage. Rather, I would tend to interpret the desperate and yet determined pre-occupation with invisibility on the part of these creative men as a demand to be heard and seen, recognized and faced as *individuals with a choice* rather than as men marked by what is all too

superficially visible, namely, their color (and by the stereotypes which go with it). In a haunting way they defend an existing but in some ways voiceless identity against the stereotypes which hide it. They are involved in a battle to reconquer for their people, but first of all (as writers must) for themselves, what Vann Woodward calls a "surrendered identity." I like this term because it does not assume total absence as many contemporary writings do, something to be searched for and found, to be granted or given, to be created or fabricated, but something to be liberated. This will be emphasized in this paper because I consider it to be an actuality, and thus the only bridge from past to future.

I almost quoted Ellison as saying that his writing was indeed an attempt to transcend "as the blues transcended the painful conditions with which they deal." But I stopped myself; and now I have quoted him to show up a second difficulty. Except for extraordinary moments of lucidity, all self-images and images of otherness (and, yes, even the blues) change their connotation kaleidoscopically before our eyes and in our discussions; and no writer of today can escape this. To have something to hold on to, we all use stereotypes temporarily endowed with ideological connotations which are a measure of Negro or white distance from the thoughtless accommodation to the postslavery period from which we are all emerging. What before was a more unconscious mixture of guilt and fear on the white side, and a mixture of hate and fear on the other, is now being replaced by the more conscious and yet not always more practical sentiments of remorse and mistrust. We have, at the moment, no choice but to live with those stereotypes and these affects: confrontation will disprove some of them, history dissolve others. In the meantime, it may be helpful to bring some concepts to bear on this problem so that the kaleidoscope may reveal patterns as well as bewildering changes.

II. *Conscious and Unconscious*

A "sense of identity" obviously has conscious aspects, such as the experience of an increased unity of the physical and mental, moral and sensual selves, and of a oneness in the way one experiences oneself and the way others seem to experience us. But this process *can* also be visible to others, for he who "knows where he is going and who is going with him" demonstrates an unmistakable, if not always easily definable, unity and radiance of appearance, physiog-

nomic as well as postural. And yet, just when a person, to all appearances, seems to "find himself," he can also be said to be "losing himself" in new tasks and affiliations. He transcends identity-consciousness; and this is surely so in the early days of any revolution and was so in the case of the young of the Negro revolution who found themselves and, in fact, found their generation in the very decision to lose themselves (as well as all guaranty) in the intensity of the struggle. Here identity-consciousness is absorbed in actuality. There are vivid and moving descriptions of this state (none more so than in Howard Zinn's account of the early days of SNCC).[7] Afterwards, no doubt, these at first anonymous heroes faced redoubled self-consciousness, a kind of double-take on the stage of history. Conversely, Negroes who must now prove themselves in the sober light of a more integrated day cannot escape a self-consciousness which is apt to interfere with the happiness of finding or losing oneself: there are and there will be the martyrs of self-chosen or accidentally aggravated identity-consciousness, who must sacrifice the innocent unity of living to a revolutionary awareness.

But the core of that inner unification called identity is at best (as we psychoanalysts would say) *pre-conscious*, that is, accessible only to musings at moments of special awareness or to the revelatory experiences of intuitive writers. Mostly it is *unconscious* and even repressed, and hereby related to all those unconscious conflicts to which only psychoanalysis has found a methodical access. Thus the concept not only is difficult to work with; it also arouses deep-seated "resistances," which must be pointed out not in the hope of doing away with them (for they are an intricate and insurmountable part of the problem of human awareness), but in order to get acquainted with a shadow which will always follow us.

"Resistance" is a term from psychoanalytic treatment proper. There it indicates a "technical" problem met with in the therapeutic attempt to induce an individual to recognize the nature (or sometimes the very fact) of his illness, to describe his thoughts freely, and to accept the interpretations given to him. But the term has also been used in a wider sense in order to characterize a general resistance to psychoanalytic insights or, indeed, to "psychic reality" itself. However, the widespread acceptance of psychoanalysis (or of what Freud is understood to have said or is reported to have said) and the freer commission of sexual and verbal acts, the omission of which is now considered to be a symptom of repression,

have not done away with a more fundamental aspect of "resistance," for it concerns the relation of man's awareness to his need for a free will, and thus something in the core of man's identity. This resistance can come to awareness in vague discomfort, often the more gnawing as it contradicts our professed interest in enlightenment:

1. If unconscious determinants should, indeed, prove operative in our very sense of self and in the very pathos of our values, does this not carry the matter of determination to a point where free will and moral choice would seem to be illusory?

2. If a man's individual identity is said to be linked to communal identities, are we not faced with another crypto-Marxism which makes man's very sense of destiny a blind function of the dialectics of history?

3. And if such unconscious determinants could, indeed, be demonstrated, is such awareness good for us?

Philosophers, no doubt, have answers to these questions, which recur in the reactions of the best-trained students when faced somewhat more systematically with insights which they otherwise devour eagerly in a non-systematic mixture of paperbacks.[8] But it must be clear that nobody can escape these questions which are really only part of a wider trend in the scrutiny of human motivation ranging from Darwin's discovery of our evolutionary animal ancestry and Marx's uncovery of class-bound behavior, to Freud's systematic exploration of the unconscious. The preoccupation with identity, therefore, may be seen not only as a symptom of "alienation," but also as a corrective trend in psychosocial evolution. It may be for this reason that revolutionary writers and writers from national and ethnic minority groups (like the Irish expatriots or our Negro and Jewish writers) have become the artistic spokesmen and prophets of identity confusion. Artistic creation, as pointed out, goes beyond complaint and exposure; it includes the moral decision that a certain painful identity-consciousness may have to be tolerated in order to provide the conscience of man with a critique of conditions, with the insight and with the conceptions necessary to heal himself of what most deeply divides and threatens him, namely, his division into what we will call *pseudo-species.*

In this new literature, pre-conscious processes are faced and unconscious ones symbolized in a way which often resembles the process of psycho-analysis; but the "case" is transcended by human revolt, the inner realignment by intense contact with historical actuality. And, in the end, are these writers not proclaiming also an

essential superiority of identity-in-torment over those identities which feel as safe and remote as a suburban home?

What is at stake here is nothing less than the realization of the fact and the obligation of man's specieshood. Great religious leaders have attempted to break through the resistances against this awareness, but their churches have tended to join rather than shun the development which we have in mind here, namely, man's deep-seated conviction that some providence has made his tribe and race or class, caste, or religion "naturally" superior to others. This seems to be part of a psychosocial evolution by which he has developed into *pseudo-species*. This fact is, of course, rooted in tribal psychology and based on all the evolutionary changes which brought about man. Among these is his prolonged childhood during which the newborn, "naturally" born to be the most "generalist" animal of all and adaptable to widely differing environments, becomes specialized as a member of a human group with its complex interplay of an "inner world" and an ethological environment. He becomes indoctrinated, then, with the conviction that his "species" alone was planned by an all-wise deity, created in a special cosmic event, and appointed by history to guard the only genuine version of humanity under the leadership of elect élites and leaders. "Pseudo" suggests pseudologia, a form of lying with at least transitory conviction; and, indeed, man's very progress has swept him along in a combination of developments in which it seems hard to bring to bear what rationality and humanity he can muster against illusions and prejudices no longer deserving of the name mythology. I mean, of course, that dangerous combination of technological specialization (including weaponry), moral righteousness, and what we may call the *territoriality of identity*, all of which make *hominem hominis lupum* far exceeding anything typical for wolves among wolves. For man is not only apt to lose all sense of species, but also to turn on another subgroup with a ferocity generally alien to the "social" animal world and, of course, with an increasing sophistication in all three—lethal weaponry, moral hypocrisy, and identity-panic. Sophistication, in fact, seems to escalate the problem just at the time when (and this would seem to be no coincidence) a more universal, a more inclusive human identity seems forcefully suggested by the very need for survival. National-socialist Germany is the most flagrant and all too recent manifestation of the murderous mass-pseudologia which can befall a modern nation.

While we all carry with us trends and tendencies which anchor

our identities in some pseudo-species, we also feel in our bones that the Second World War has robbed such self-indulgence of all innocence, and that any threat of a third one would lead man's adaptative genius to its own defeat. But those who see what the "compact majority" continues to deny and to dissimulate must also attempt to understand that for man to realize his specieshood and to exchange a wider identity for his pseudo-species, means not only the creation of a new and shared technological universe, but also the out-growing of prejudices which have been essential to all (or almost all) identities in the past. For each *positive identity* is also defined by *negative* images (as we saw even in Freud's reference to the intellectual components of his identity), and we must now discuss the unpleasant fact that our god-given identities often live off the degradation of others.

III. *Positive and Negative*

As I restudied Freud's address, I remember a remark made recently by a warm-hearted and influential American Jew: "Some instinctive sense tells every Jewish mother that she must make her child study, that his intelligence is his pass to the future. Why does a Negro mother not care? Why does she not have the same instinctive sense?" This was a rhetorical question, of course; he wanted to know which of many possible answers I would give first. I suggested that, given American Negro history, the equivalent "instinctive sense" may have told the majority of Negro mothers to keep their children, and especially the gifted and the questioning ones, away from futile and dangerous competition, that is, for survival's sake to keep them in their place even if that place is defined by an indifferent and hateful "compact majority."

That the man said "mothers" immediately marks one of the problems we face in approaching Negro identity. The Jewish mothers he had in mind would expect to be backed up by their husbands or, in fact, to act in their behalf; the Negro mothers would not. Negro mothers are apt to cultivate the "surrendered identity" forced on Negro men for generations. This, so the literature would suggest, has reduced the Negro to a reflection of the "negative" recognition which surrounded him like an endless recess of distorting mirrors. How his positive identity has been undermined systematically—first under the unspeakable system of slavery in North America and then by the system of enslavement

perpetuated in the rural South and the urban North—has been extensively, carefully, and devastatingly documented.

Here the concept of a negative identity may help to clarify three related complications:

1. Every person's psychosocial identity contains a hierarchy *of* positive *and* negative elements, the latter resulting from the fact that the growing human being, throughout his childhood, is presented with evil prototypes as well as with ideal ones (by reward and punishment, by parental example, and by the community's typology as revealed in wit and gossip, in tale and story). These are, of course, culturally related: in the background which gives prominence to intellectual achievement, some such negative roles as the Schlemihl will not be wanting. The human being, in fact, is warned *not* to become what he often had no intention *of* becoming so that he can learn to anticipate what he must avoid. Thus, the positive identity (far from being a static constellation *of* traits or roles) is always in conflict with that past which is to be lived down and by that potential future which is to be prevented.

2. The individual belonging to an oppressed and exploited minority, which is aware of the dominant cultural ideals but prevented from emulating them, is apt to fuse the negative images held up to him by the dominant majority with his own negative identity. The reasons for this exploitability (and temptation to exploit) lie in man's very evolution and development as pseudospecies. There is ample evidence of "inferiority" feelings and of morbid self-hate in all minority groups; and, no doubt, the righteously and fiendishly efficient way in which the Negro slave in America was forced into and kept in conditions preventing in most the incentive for independent ambition now continues to exert itself as a widespread and deep-seated inhibition to utilize equality even where it is "granted." Again, the literature abounds in descriptions of how the Negro, instead, found escape into musical or spiritual worlds or expressed his rebellion in compromises of behavior now viewed as mocking caricatures, such as obstinate meekness, exaggerated childlikeness, or superficial submissiveness. And yet, is "the Negro" not often all too summarily and all too exclusively discussed in such a way that his negative identity is defined *only* in terms of his defensive adjustments to the dominant white majority? Do we (and can we) know enough about the relationship of positive and negative elements *within* the Negro personality and *within* the Negro community? This alone would reveal how negative is negative and how positive, positive.

3. As yet least understood, however, is the fact that the oppressor has a vested interest in the negative identity of the oppressed because that negative identity is a projection of his own unconscious negative identity—a projection which, up to a point, makes him feel superior but also, in a brittle way, whole. The discussion of the pseudo-species may have clarified some of this. But a number of questions remain. One comes to wonder, for example, about the ways in which a majority, suddenly aware of a vital split in itself over the fact that it has caused a near-fatal split in a minority, may, in its sudden zeal to regain its moral position and to face the facts squarely, inadvertently tend to *confirm* the minority's negative image of itself and this in the very act of dwelling exclusively and even self-indulgently upon the majority's sins. A clinician may be forgiven for questioning the curative values of an excessive dose of moral zeal. I find, for example, even the designation "culturally deprived" somewhat ironic (although I admire much of the work done under this banner) because I am especially aware of the fact that the middle-class culture, of which the slum children are deprived, deprives some of the white children of experiences which might prevent much neurotic maladjustment. There is, in fact, an exquisite poetic justice in the historical fact that many white young people who feel deeply deprived *because* of their family's "culture" find an identity and a solidarity in living and working with those who are said to be deprived for lack of such culture. Such confrontation may lead to new mutual insights; and I have not, in my lifetime, heard anything approaching the immediacy of common human experience revealed in stories from today's South (and from yesterday's India).

In this connection we may also ask a question concerning the measurements used in diagnosing the Negro American's condition, and diagnosis, it must be remembered, defines the prognosis, and this not least because it contributes to the patient's self-awareness and attitude toward his suffering.

Our fellow psychiatrist Thomas Pettigrew, in his admirable compilation *A Profile of the Negro American*, employs identity terms only in passing. He offers a wealth of solid and all the more shocking evidence of the illness of the Negro American's intelligence and of the disorganization of his family life. If I choose from the examples reported by Pettigrew one of the most questionable and even amusing, it is in order to clarify the place of single testable *traits* in the whole *configuration* of an individual's development and of his people's history.

Pettigrew, following Burton and Whiting, discusses the problem that

> [Boys] from fatherless homes must painfully achieve a *masculine self-image* late in their childhood after having established an original self-image on the basis of the only parental model they have had—their mother. Several studies point to the applicability of this *sex-identity problem* to lower-class Negro males.

He reports that

> Two objective test assessments of widely different groups—Alabama jail prisoners and Wisconsin working-class veterans with tuberculosis—found that Negro males scored higher than white males on a *measure of femininity*. . . . This measure is a part of the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory (MMPI), a well-known psychological instrument that requires the respondent to judge the applicability to himself of over five hundred simple statements. Thus, Negroes in these samples generally agreed more often with such "feminine" choices as, "*I would like to be a singer*" and "I think that *I feel more intensely* than most people do."

Pettigrew wisely puts "feminine" in quotation marks. We will assume that the M.M.P.I. is an "objective test assessment for widely different groups" including Alabama jail prisoners and patients on a tubercular ward, and that incidental test blemishes in the end all come-out-in-the-wash of statistics so that the over-all conclusions may point to significant differences between Negroes and whites and between indices of femininity and of masculinity. That such assessment singles out as "feminine" the wish to be a singer and "feeling more intensely than most people do," may be a negligible detail. And yet, this detail suggests that the choice of test items and the generalizations drawn from them may say at least as much about the test and the testers as about the subjects tested. To "want to be a singer" or "to feel intensely" seems to be something only a man with feminine traits would acknowledge in that majority of respondents on whom the test was first developed and standardized. But why, one wonders, should a lower-class Negro locked up in jail or in a tuberculosis ward not admit to a wish to be a man like Paul Robeson or Harry Belafonte, and also that he feels more intensely (if, indeed, he knows what this means) than the chilly business-like whites around him? To be a singer and to feel intensely may be facets of a masculine ideal gladly admitted if you grew up in Alabama (or, for that matter, in Napoli), whereas it would be a blemish to be denied in a majority having adjusted to other masculine ideals. In fact, in Alabama and in Naples an em-

phasis on artistic self-expression and intense feeling may be close to the core of your positive identity—so close that the loss or devaluation of such emphasis by way of "integration" may make you a drifter on the murky sea of adjustable "roles." In the case of the compact white majority, the denial of "intense feelings" may, in turn, be part of a white identity problem which contributes to the prejudiced rejection of the Negro's potential or periodical intensity. Tests harboring similar distinctions may be offering "objective" evidence of racial differences, but may also be symptomatic of them. If this is totally overlooked, and this is my main point, the test will only emphasize, and the tester will only report, and the reader of the report (white or Negro) will only perceive the distance between the Negro's "disintegrated" self-imagery and what is assumed to be the white's "integrated" one.

As Pettigrew (in another connection) says starkly, putting himself in the shoes of a Negro child to be tested:

> . . After all, an intelligence test is a middle-class white man's instrument; it is a device whites use to prove their superiorities and get ahead in the white world. Achieving a high test score does not have the same meaning for a lower-status Negro child, and it may even carry a definite connotation of personal threat. In this sense, scoring low on intelligence measures may for some talented Negro children be a rational response to perceived danger.[9]

The whole *test-event* thus itself underlies a certain historical and social relativity to be clarified in each case in terms of the actual identity configuration. By the same token, it is by no means certain that the individual undergoing such a procedure will be the same person when he escapes the predicament of the test procedure and joins, say, his peers on the playground or on a street corner. Thus, a "profile" of the Negro American made up of different methods under different conditions may offer decisively different configurations of "traits." This does not make one procedure wrong and the other right, but it makes both (and more) essential in the establishment of criteria for an existing identity configuration. On the other hand, it is all too often taken for granted that the *investigator* (and his identity conflicts) invisibly blends into his method even when he is a representative of a highly (and maybe defensively) verbal subgroup of whites and is perceived as such by subjects who are near-illiterate or come from an illiterate background.

In this connection, I would like to refer to Kenneth Clark's moving characterization of the sexual life of the "marginal young peo-

ple in the ghetto." As a responsible father-figure, he knows he must not condone what he nevertheless must also defend against deadly stereotypes.

Illegitimacy in the ghetto cannot be understood or dealt with in terms of punitive hostility, as in the suggestion that unwed mothers be denied welfare if illegitimacy is repeated. Both approaches obscure, with empty and at times hypocritical moralizing, the desperate yearning of the young for acceptance and identity, the need to be meaningful to someone else even for a moment without implication of a pledge of undying fealty and forevermore. . . . To expose oneself further to the chances of failure in a sustained and faithful relationship is too large to risk. The *intrinsic value* of the relationship is the only value because there can be no other.[18]

This places a legal or moral item into its "actual" context—a context which always also reveals something about those who would judge and stereotype rather than understand: for is not the *intrinsic value of the relationship* exactly that item (hard to define, hard to test, and legally irrelevant) which may be lost in some more fortunate youths who suffer under a bewildering and driving pluralism of values?[19]

IV. *Past and Future*

Turning now to the new young Negroes: "My God," a Negro woman student exclaimed the other day in a small meeting, "what am I supposed to be integrated *out of*? I laugh like my grandmother—and I would rather die than not laugh like that." There was a silence in which you could hear the stereotypes click; for even laughter had now joined those aspects of Negro culture and Negro personality which have become suspect as the marks of submission and fatalism, delusion and escape. But the young girl did not give in with some such mechanical apology as "by which I do not mean, of course . . ." and the silence was pregnant with that immediacy of joint experience which characterizes moments when an identity conflict becomes palpable. It was followed by laughter —embarrassed, amused, defiant.

To me, the young woman had expressed one of the anxieties attending a rapid reconstitution of identity elements: "supposed to" reflects a sense of losing the active, the choosing role which is of the essence in a sense of identity as a continuity of the living past and the anticipated future. I have indicated that single items of behavior or imagery can change their quality within new identity con-

figurations; and yet these same indices once represented an integration as well as an integrity of Negro life—"such as it was," to be sure, but the only existing inner integration for which the Negro is now "supposed to" exchange an unsure outer integration. Desegregation, compensation, balance, re-conciliation—do they all sometimes seem to save the Negro at the cost of an absorption which he is not sure will leave much of himself left? Thus the "revolution" poses an "identity crisis" in more than one way; the Negro writer's "complicated assertions and denials of identity" (to use Ellison's words) have simpler antecedents, not less tragic for their simplicity.

For identity development has its time, or rather two kinds of time: a *developmental stage* in the life of the individual, and a *period* in history. There is, then, also a complementarity of life-history and history. Unless provoked prematurely and disastrously (and the biographies of sensitive Negro writers as well as direct observations of Negro children attest to such tragic prematurity) psychosocial identity is not feasible before the beginning, even as it is not dispensable after the end of *adolescence*, when the body, now fully grown, grows together into an individual appearance; when sexuality, matured, seeks partners in sensual play and, sooner or later, in parenthood; when the mind, fully developed, can begin to envisage a career for the individual within a historical perspective—all idiosyncratic developments which must fuse with each other in a new sense of sameness and continuity. But the increasing *irreversibility* of all choices (whether all too open or foreclosed) leads to what we call the *identity crisis* which here does not mean a *fatal turn* but rather (as in drama and in medicine) an *inescapable turning point* for better *or* for worse. "Better" here means a confluence of the constructive energies of individual and society, which contributed to physical grace, sexual spontaneity, mental alertness, emotional directness, and social "actualness." "Worse" means prolonged *identity confusion* in the young individual. Here it must be emphasized—for this is the point at which the psychosexual theories of psychoanalysis fuse with the psychosocial ones—that identity formation is decisive for the integration of sexuality (whether the cultural trend is toward repression or expression) and for the constructive use of aggression. But the crisis of youth is also the crisis of a generation and of the ideological soundness of its society. (There is also a complementarity of identity and ideology). The crisis is least marked and least "noisy" in that segment of youth

which in a given era is able to invest its fidelity[18] in an ideological trend associated with a new technical and economic expansion, (such as mercantilism, colonialism, industrialization). For here new types and roles of competence emerge. Today this includes the young people in all countries and in all classes who can fit into and take active charge of technical and scientific development, learning thereby to identify with a lifestyle of testing, inventing, and producing. Youth which is eager for such experience but unable to find access to it will feel estranged from society, upset in its sexuality, and unable to apply its aggression constructively. It may be that today much of Negro Youth as well as an artistic-humanistic section of White Youth feel disadvantaged and, therefore, come to develop a certain solidarity in regard to "the crisis" or "the revolution": for young people in privileged middle-class homes as well as in underprivileged Negro homes may miss that sameness and continuity throughout development which makes a grandmother's warmth and a fervent aspiration part of an identical world. One may go further and say that this whole segment of American youth is attempting to develop its own ideology and its own rites of confirmation by following the official call to the external frontiers of the American way of life (Peace Corps), by going to the internal ones (deep South), or by attempting in colleges (California) to fill an obvious void in the traditional balance of the American way of life—a void caused by a dearth of that realism, solidarity, and ideology which welds together a functioning radical opposition.

We will come back to this point. Here we may suggest that identity also contains a complementarity of past and future both in the individual and in society: it links the actuality of a living past with that of a promising future. This formulation excludes, I hope, any romanticizing of the past or any salesmanship in the creation of future "postures."

In regard to "the revolution" and its gains, one can only postulate that the unblinking realism and ruthless de-masking of much of the present literature supports a new sense of toughness in the "face of reality." It fits this spirit that Pettigrew's "Profile," for example, fails to list such at any rate untestable items as (in alphabetical order) companionability, humor, motherhood, music, sensuality, spirituality, sports, and so forth. They all are suspect, I know, as traits of an accommodation romanticized by whites. But this makes presently available "profiles" really the correction of caricatures, rather than attempts at even a sketch of a portrait. But can a new or

renewed identity emerge from corrected caricatures? One thinks of all those who are unable to derive identity gains from the "acceptance of reality" at its worst (as the writers do and the researchers) and to whom a debunking of all older configurations *may* become a further *confirmation* of worthlessness and helplessness.

It is in this context also that I must question the fact that in many an index the Negro father appears *only* under the heading of "absence." Again, the relationship between family disintegration, father-absence, and all kinds of social and psychiatric pathology is overwhelming. "Father absence" does belong in every index and in the agenda of national concern. But as the *only* item related to fatherhood *or* motherhood does it not do grave injustice to the presence of many, many mothers, and at least of some fathers? Whatever the historical, sociological, or legal interpretation of the Negro mother's (and grandmother's) saving presence in the whole half-circle of plantation culture from Venezuela through the Carribbean into our South, is it an item to be omitted from the agenda of the traditional Negro identity? Can Negro culture afford to have the "strong mother" stereotyped as a liability? For a person's (and a people's) identity begins in the rituals of infancy, when mothers make it clear with many pre-literate means that to be born is good and that a child (let the bad world call it colored or list it as illegitimate) is deserving of warmth. As I pointed out in another *Dædalus* publication,[14] these mothers have put an indelible mark on "Negro Culture" and what they accomplished should be one of the proudest chapters in cultural history.

The systematic exploitation of the Negro male as a domestic animal and the denial to him of the status of responsible fatherhood are, on the other hand, two of the most shameful chapters in the history of this Christian nation. For an imbalance of mother-and-father presence is never good, and becomes increasingly bad as the child grows older; for then the trust in the world established in infancy may be all the more disappointed. Under urban and industrial conditions it may, indeed, become the gravest factor in personality disorganization. But, again, the "disorganization" of the Negro family must not be measured solely by its distance from the white or Negro middle-class family with its one-family housing and legal and religious legitimizations. Disintegration must be measured and understood also as a distortion of the *traditional* if often unofficial *Negro family pattern*. The traditional wisdom of the mothers will be needed as will the help of the Negro men who (in spite

of such circumstances) actually did become fathers in the full sense.

In the meantime, the problem of the function of both parents, each strong in his or her way, and both benignly present in the home when needed most is a problem facing the family in any industrial society on a universal scale. The whole great society must develop ways to provide equality of opportunity in employment and yet also differential ways of permitting mothers and fathers to attend to their duties toward their children. The maternal-paternal dimension may well also serve to clarify the fact that each stage of development needs its own optimum environment, and that to find a balance between maternal and paternal strength means to assign to each a period of dominance in the children's life. The mother's period is the earliest and, therefore, the most basic. There is a deep relation between the first "identity" experienced in the early sensual and sensory exchanges with the mother(s)—the first re-cognition—and that final integration in adolescence when all earlier identifications are assembled and the young person meets his society and his historical era.

V. *Total and Whole*

In his book *Who Speaks for the Negro?* R. P. Warren records another exclamation by a young woman student:

> . . .The auditorium had been packed—mostly Negroes, but with a scattering of white people. A young girl with pale skin, dressed like any coed anywhere, in the clothes for a public occasion, is on the rostrum. She is leaning forward a little on her high heels, speaking with a peculiar vibrance in a strange irregular rhythm, out of some inner excitement, some furious, taut élan, saying: "—and I tell you I have discovered a great truth. I have discovered a great joy. I have discovered that I am black. I am black! You out there—oh, yes, you may have black faces, but your hearts are white, your minds are white, you have been white-washed!"

Warren reports a white woman's reaction to this outburst and surmises that if this woman

> at that moment heard any words in her head, they were most likely the echo of the words of Malcolm X: "White devils!" And if she saw any face, it must have been the long face of Malcolm X grinning with sardonic certitude.

I think we understand this fear. She has witnessed what I will call a "totalistic" re-arrangement of images which is, indeed, basic to

some of the ideological movements of modern history. By totalism I mean an inner regrouping of imagery, almost a *negative conversion*, by which erstwhile negative identity elements become totally dominant, making out of erstwhile positive elements a combination to be excluded totally.[15] This, however, can happen in a transitory way in many young people of all colors and classes who rebel and join, wander off or isolate themselves; it can subside with the developmental storm or lead to an unexpected commitment. Depending on historical and social conditions, the process has its malignant potentials, as exemplified in "confirmed" pervert-delinquent or bizarre-extremist states of mind and forms of behavior.

The chill which this process can give us in its political implications refers back to our sense of historical shock when post-Versailles German youth, once so sensitive to foreign critique, but then on the rebound from a love of Kultur which promised no realistic identity, fell for the Nazi transvaluation of civilized values. The transitory Nazi identity, based on a *totalism* marked by the radical *exclusion* of foreign otherness, failed to integrate historically given identity elements, reaching instead for a pseudologic perversion of history. Obviously both radical segregationism, in its recourse to an adjusted Bible, and Black Muslimism are the counterparts of such a phenomenon in this country. In the person of Malcolm X the *specific rage* which is aroused wherever identity development loses the promise of a traditionally assured wholeness, was demonstrated theatrically. Such latent rage (by no means always unjustified) is easily exploited by fanatic and psychopathic leaders: it can explode in the arbitrary destructiveness of mobs; and it can in a more repressed form serve the efficient violence of organized machines of destruction. Yet, the Black Muslims, too, were able to call on some of the best potentials of the individuals who felt "included."

This country as a whole, however, is not hospitable to such totalistic turns, and the inability or, indeed, unwillingness of youth in revolt to come to systematic ideological conclusions is in itself an important historical fact. The temporary degeneration of the Free Speech Movement in California into a revolt of dirty words was probably representative of the intrusion of an impotent totalism into a promising radicalism. This reluctance to be regimented in the service of a political ideology, however, can make the latent violence in our disadvantaged youth that much more destructive to personal unity and, sporadically, to "law and order." But note also, that the rate of crime and of delinquency in some Southern counties was re-

ported to have dropped sharply when the Negro population became involved in social protest.

The alternative to an exclusive totalism is the wholeness of a *more inclusive identity*. This leads to another question: If the Negro American wants to "find" that wider identity which will permit him to be self-certain as a Negro (or a descendant of Negroes) *and* integrated as an American, what joint *historical actuality* can he count on? For we must know that when all the *objective realities* are classified and investigated, and all the studies assessed, the question remains: what are the *historical actualities* with which we can work?

Returning once more to the individual, I can now register a certain impatience with the faddish equation of the term identity with the question "Who am I?" This question nobody would ask himself except in a more or less transient morbid state, in a creative self-confrontation, or in an adolescent state sometimes combining both; wherefore on occasion I find myself asking a student who claims that he is in an "identity-crisis," whether he is complaining or boasting. For most, the pertinent question really is "What do I want to make of myself—and—what do I have to work with?" Here, the awareness of inner motivations is, at best, useful in keeping the future from being swamped by infantile wishes and adolescent defenses. Beyond that, only a restored or better trained sense of historical actuality can lead to a deployment of those energies which both activate and are activated by potential developments. How potential developments become historical fact is demonstrated by the way in which "culturally deprived" Negro children meet a sudden historical demand with surprising dignity and fortitude. In an unpublished manuscript, Robert Coles, who has made significant contributions to this problem, presents psychiatric data which (according to our theories) would have predicted for a lone Negro boy an inevitable and excusable failure in his task of personifying (with one other child) the desegregation of a whole school. But he did stand up to it unforgettably—and he is on his way.

In all parts of the world the struggle now is for anticipatory and *more inclusive identities*: what has been a driving force in revolutions and reformations, in the founding of churches and in the building of empires has become a contemporaneous world-wide competition. Revolutionary doctrines promise the new identity of peasant-and-worker to the youth of countries which must overcome their tribal, feudal, or colonial past; new nations attempt to absorb

regions; new markets, nations; and world space is extended to include outer space as the proper locale for a universal technological identity.

At this point, we are beyond the question (and Gandhi did much to teach this to the British) of how a remorseful or scared colonialist may dispense corrective welfare in order to appease the need for a wider identity. The problem is rather how he includes himself in the wider pattern. For a more inclusive identity is a development by which two groups who previously had come to depend on each other's negative identities (by living in a traditional situation of mutual enmity or in a symbiotic accommodation to one-sided exploitation) join their identities in such a way that new potentials are activated in both.

VI. *Exclusive and Inclusive*

What wider identities are competing for the Negro American's commitment? Some, it seems, are too wide to be "actual," some too narrow. As too wide I would characterize the identity of a "human being" bestowed, according to a strange modern habit of a latter-day humanistic narcissism, by humans to humans (patients, women, Negroes, and so on). While this at times represents genuine transcendence of the pseudo-species mentality, it often also implies that the speaker, having undergone some revelatory hardships, is in a position to grant membership in humanity to others. But it also tends to take all specificity out of "human" relations; for man meets man always in categories (be they adult and child, man and woman, employer and employee, leader and follower, majority and minority) and "human inter-relations" can truly be only the expression of divided function and the concrete overcoming of the specific ambivalence inherent in them. I would not be surprised to find that our Negro colleagues and friends often sense such a residue of species-wide colonialism in the "best" of us. In contrast, the concrete work on the achievement of minimum rights for the *Negro American citizen* has created moments of the most intense sharing of the human condition.

Probably the most inclusive and the most absorbing identity potential in the world today is that of *technical skill*. This is what Lenin meant when he advocated that first of all the mushik be put on a tractor. True, he meant: as a preparation for the identity of a class-conscious proletarian. But it has come to mean more today, namely, the participation in an area of activity and experience

which (for better or for worse) verifies modern man as a worker and planner. It is one thing to exclude oneself from such verification because one has proven oneself gifted in other respects and able to draw on the traditional verification provided by Humanism or the Enlightenment—at least sufficiently so that alienation from the present, too, adds up to some reasonably comfortable "human identity." It is quite another to be excluded from it by literacy requirements which prevent the proof that one is mechanically gifted or the use of the gift after such proof is given. Israel, a small country with a genius for renewing identities, has shown (for example, in the use of its army as an educational institution) that illiteracy can be corrected in the process of putting people where they feel they are needed and are needed.

The "*African identity*" is a strong contender for a wider identity, as Harold Isaacs has shown. It offers a highly actual setting for the solidarity of black skin color, and probably also provides the American Negro with an equivalent of what all other Americans could boast about or disavow: an (if ever so remote) homeland. However, the American Negro's mode of separation from Africa robbed him of the identity element "*immigrant*." There seems to be a question also whether to Africans a Negro American is more black or more American, and whether the Negro American, in actual contacts with Africans, wants to be more American or more Negro. The Black Muslims, at any rate, seem to have called themselves at first Asiatics, to emphasize the wider mystical unity of Muslimism.

The great *middle class* as the provider of an identity of consumers (for whom, indeed, Pettigrew's prescription of "dollars and dignity" seems to be most fitting) has been discussed in its limitations by many, but by none more eloquently than by the President in his Howard University speech. The middle-class identity (a class pre-occupied with matters of real estate and of consumption, of status and of posture) will include more and more of the highly gifted and the fortunate, but, if it does not yield to the wider identity of the Negro American, it obviously creates new barriers between these few and the mass of Negroes, whose distance from white competition is thereby only increased. "Work and dignity" may be a more apt slogan, provided that work dignifies by providing a "living" dollar as well as a challenge to competence, for without both "opportunity" is slavery perpetuated.

But here as everywhere the question of the Negro American's identity imperceptibly shades into the question of what *the* Ameri-

can wants to make of himself in the technology of the future. In this sense, the greatest gain all around (and one now to be consolidated) may be what the doctors at Howard University have discerned as *pro-social action* on the part of Negroes. I mean the fact that their protest, pervaded by nonviolent spirit and yet clearly defying local law and custom, has been accepted by much of the nation as American, and that the President himself would echo the slogan "we shall overcome," thus helping to align "pro-social" action with American action. The judiciary and legislative levels, too, have attempted to absorb "the revolution" on a grand scale. But absorption can be defensive and merely adjustive, or it can be adaptive and creative; this must as yet be seen.

In the meantime, the success of pro-social action should not altogether obscure an *anti-social* identity element relevantly recounted in the autobiographies of Negro Americans. I mean the tragic sacrifice of youth designated as delinquent and criminal. They, no doubt, often defended whatever identity elements were available to them by revolting in the only way open to them—a way of vicious danger, and yet often of self-respect and solidarity. Like the outcast heroes of the American frontier, some anti-social types among the Negroes are not expendable from the history of their people—not yet.

Our genuinely humanist youth, however, will continue to extend a *religious identity element* into race-relations: for future over-all issues of identity will include the balance within man of technological strivings and ethical and ultimate concerns. I believe (but you must not tell them for they suspect such words) that the emergence of those youths who stepped from utter anonymity right into our national affairs does contain a new and *wider religious element* embracing nothing less than the promise of a mankind freer of the attitudes of a pseudo-species: that utopia of universality proclaimed as the most worthy goal by all world religions and yet always entombed in new empires of dogma which turned into or allied themselves with new pseudo-species. The churches, too, have come to the insight that earthly prejudices—fanatical or outspoken, hiding in indifference, or later: and repressed—feed into that deadly combination which now makes man "the lethal factor" in the universe, for as pointed out it ties limitless technical ambition (including the supremacy of weapons of annihilation) and the hypocrisy of outworn moralistic dogma to the territoriality of mutually exclusive identities. The counter force, nonviolence, may always be a compelling

and creative actuality only at critical moments, and only for "the salt of the earth." But Gandhi took the first steps toward a world-wide application to politics of principles once purely religious.

As far as the world-wide frontier of *post-colonial* and *colored identities* is concerned, it is hard to predict their fate in the clash of new national interests in Africa and Asia. As of now, however, one cannot ignore the possible implications of American action in Vietnam for a world-wide identification of colored people with the naked heroism of the Vietcong revolutionaries. The very demand that North Vietnam give in (and even if it were nearly on her own terms) to a super-organized assault by a superfluity of lethal weapons may simply be too reminiscent of the function of firepower in colonial expansion in general; of police power in particular; and of a certain (implicitly contemptuous) attitude which assumes that "natives" will give in to pressures to which the master-races would consider themselves impervious (*vide* the British in the Blitz). It must be obvious that differences of opinion in this country in regard to American military involvement in Asia are not merely a matter of the faulty reading of facts or of lack of moral stamina on one side or the other, but also of a massive identity conflict. Intrinsic to the dominant political-technological nucleus of an American identity is the expectation that such power as can now be unleashed can be used to advantage in limited employment, and has built-in safeguards against an unthinkable conflagration. But there will be urgent voices abroad and sincere protest at home expressing the perplexity of those who perceive only one active moral frontier of equality and of peace extending from the center of the daily life of America to the peripheries of its foreign concerns. Here the Negro American shares the fate of a new and wider American dilemma.

I have now listed a few of the emerging "wider" identity elements in order to introduce queries which other members of the symposium are better equipped to answer. Such listing can only lead to one tentative impression, namely, that none of these alternatives offers to the American Negro a nucleus for a total realignment, and that all of them must find their place in a new constellation, the nucleus of which is already clearly suggested by the two words Negro and American.

Concluding Remark

As used in the foregoing, the term identity has betrayed its elin-

ical origin in the *study of individual disturbances and of social ills.* But even where applied to the assessment of a social problem it remains clinical in methodology, that is, it can be used only to focus the thinking of a "staff." For the consideration of identity problems calls for the "taking of history," the localization and the diagnostic assessment of disintegration, the testing of intact resources, the approximate prognosis, and the weighing of possible action—each based on specialties of approach and often of temperament. In addition to all this, a certain intuitive insight based on experience and on conviction is indispensable in the assessment of *verifiable reality* and of *modifiable actuality.* On the way some theory may help; but a concept should be retained only as long as it brings some preliminary order into otherwise baffling phenomena.[10]

References

1. Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks for the Negro?* (New York, 1965), p. 17.
2. These notes are a counterpart to the "Memorandum on Identity and Negro Youth," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1964).
3. Henry James (ed.), *The Letters of William James*, Vol. I (Boston, 1920), p. 190.
4. See my introduction to G. B. Blaine and C. C. McArthur (eds.), *Emotional Problems of the Student* (New York, 1961).
5. Sigmund Freud, "Address to the Society of B'nai B'rith," in *The Standard Edition* (London, 1959), p. 273.
6. Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (New York, 1965).
7. Howard Zinn, SNCC, *The New Abolitionists* (Boston, 1964).
8. Not all doubt or discomfort regarding the conception of identity is to be seen as "resistance" by any means. Powerful methodological questions are inescapable. I would also share the reluctance to accept psychosocial identity as "all there is" to human identity. Psychosocial phenomena, however, are part of that engagement in a period of the life cycle and in a given historical era without which an unfolding of human potentials (including an eventual transcendence) seems unthinkable.
9. Thomas F. Pettigrew, *A Profile of the Negro American* (Princeton, N. J., 1964), p. 19. (Italics added.)
10. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
11. Kenneth B. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 73. (Italics added.)

22. Under the tense conditions of a sudden awareness of facts long suppressed and distorted, new stereotypes are apt to enter the imagery of the most thoughtful. In *Crisis in Black and White*, C. E. Silberman discusses S. M. Elkin's basic book *Slavery* and, half-quoting and half-editorializing, uses the stereotype "childlike" as a common denominator of Negro personality and the transient regressions of inmates in concentration camps. Along with truly childish qualities, such as silliness, we find fawning, servile, dishonest, manipulative, egotistic, and thievish activities all summed up under "this childlike behavior." (p. 70). Here childlike replaces childish or regressed, as feminine often replaces effeminate, which is both misleading and destructive of the image of the genuine article.

23. See Erik H. Erikson, "Youth: Fidelity and Diversity," *Youth: Change and Challenge* (New York, 1961), pp. 1-23.

24. *Ibid.*

25. See Robert J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (New York, 1961).

26. Attempts at transverting clinical concepts into quantifiable items subject to experimental verification are always undertaken at the risk of the experimenter.